Animals for Human Consumption

By. Joshua D. Glawson

I.

This will be the first essay in a short series of distinguishing terms, i.e. 'moral,' 'ethic,' and 'Justice.' I shall defend using animals for human consumption, the current popular problems of big game hunting, and a possible solution to the issues giving as close to a win-win as possible throughout this short series. Overall, the running theme will contend that humans are not "equal" to other species of animals, especially not under the law.

When it comes to the topic of animals and animal abuse, people can have extremely polarizing reactions. **Commercials** with images of abused and emaciated puppies serenaded by Sarah McLachlan bring tears to some people. Campaigns by PETA can lead people to change their diets and normal shopping habits. Vegetarians have become the retro, and now veganism has the "moral" high ground; especially if they also only by GMO-free, certified organic, gluten-free, fair trade, locally grown, fresh, raw, fruits and vegetables. The common theme is that they believe it is 'immoral' to use animals as means for food, clothing, materials, oils, etc.

They contend that harming animals, in any way, should be equal under the law to that of hurting fellow human beings. If they are not as extreme as to

believe there should be legal limitations of using or abusing animals, they typically feel it is an immoral act to do so. The rarer group consists of those that just choose to be vegetarian or vegan solely for “health purposes.” I shall not pick on those that peacefully choose to have a vegetarian diet or those that peacefully choose a vegan lifestyle. Rather, I am concerned with the growing number of people, e.g. vegans, vegetarians, and animal rights activists, who feel it prudent to coerce others or condemn others based on false premises, and wish to use the coercive power of government to force people into their ideology of equating humans to other animals.

It is imperative to first define **‘morality,’** or what it means to be ‘moral.’ It can be defined as of or relating to principles of right and wrong in behavior, and it is directly from the Latin word ‘**moralis**,’ meaning proper behavior of an individual within a society. The Greek ‘ethikos,’ i.e. ‘ethics’ in English, is associated with mores, customs, manners, etc. So, to be ‘moral’ is only between people in their relationships with other people, and ‘ethics’ are the codes of moral conduct held by a society or group.

For example, it is ‘immoral’ to murder a fellow human as it is an infringement on someone else, and this is an ‘ethical’ position held in Christianity since it is the Christian code of moral conduct. As it pertains to morality, most people hold certain morals to be true nearly universally such as people should not murder, rape, steal, etc. under most circumstances. However, there are also some morals that more and more people will not

agree are wrong such as lying, gluttony, cheating, lusting, etc. under many circumstances.

Therefore, it is **best for this article** to not only have defined 'morality' and 'ethics,' but to stick to the ethical considerations of the legality of using **animals for consumption**. That will at least make for less debate over 'objective' and 'subjective' 'morality' which is a much deeper philosophical topic of discussion. Nevertheless, moral laws do not make moral people, and any laws based on ethical claims can have possible backlash, such as Christian ethics proclaiming homosexuality or premarital sex to be illegal, or anti-marijuana laws because it makes people feel an elevated sense of pleasure. These ethics based laws infringe on the rights of the individual to freely act and exchange with others through voluntary and mutual agreement. To not allow people the freedom to act humanely between one another is, in fact, inhumane.

Many people that love animals will declare certain actions done to animals are "inhumane." To be '**inhumane**' means to be without compassion for misery or suffering; however, as the Latin of the word suggests 'in' is the 'opposite of' being 'human.' The word suggests that it is to be savage, cruel, barbarous, etc. As, we, humans have evolved over the past **200,000 years**, we have utilized animals for the sake of our survival and benefit.

We have used them for food, clothing, oils, tools, testing for pharmaceutical drugs and learning about ourselves through them, as working animals, and

as pets; we have also studied their behaviors and learned from them. According to Aristotle, humans are a **'rational animal**.' We utilize what is around us to survive, benefit, flourish, and prosper, to a much greater extent than any other animal. So, if a person is using animals for these purposes, and not simply abusing an animal out of anger, they are not acting 'inhumanely,' rather they are acting very 'humanely,' as they benefit themselves and likely other humans.

Consequentially, humans using animals for the aforementioned purposes, aside from abuse, can also benefit other animals who require meat for sustenance and medicine made from animals. This suggests that if people were not to use some animals for consumption and use, what currently exists would be rather difficult, if not impossible, to sustain. Some of our beloved pets would suffer and die so some vegetarians may be willing to use some animals in order to save more animals and people.

'Animal **abuse**' is a vague and subjective term, usually referring to 'animal cruelty' or 'neglect.' What is determined to be 'cruel' or 'neglectful' can vary depending on the laws of that area, but typically it means to not feed, let to wallow in the animal's waste, not have enough space to move, to beat the animal, to torture, left without proper shelter, etc. According to Seventeenth Century philosopher, **Samuel von Pufendorf**, animals do not have intrinsic rights, but we **should not abuse them out of anger** because of what it does to the human, not the animal.

His idea is that by hitting a dog, for example, out of sheer anger makes the person hitting the dog more callous to other people and to themselves. In fact, modern science has suggested that when people habitually act out of anger by harming animals, things, fellow humans, or themselves, they are **wiring their brain** to continue to do the same. Even more terrifying are the cases where people first began torturing and killing animals for the thrill before moving on to human victims, **becoming serial killers**, although that is not necessarily true as it is correlation and not causation, and there are also a number of mass murderers who were vegetarian or vegan.

In both of these examples of anger and torture, these actions are not increasing utility, they are instead becoming a hindrance for the person's growth and reason. Viz., utilizing animals for consumption and mere abuse out of anger are not equal to one another as it pertains to humankind.

The next essay will detail the meaning of 'Justice,' and what it is not.

II.

On social media, there are often pictures of gruesome images with recently killed rhinos, elephants, lions, primates, etc. With these images typically comes a plethora of heated comments and arguments, opinions about the well-being of the animals, threats against the lives of the humans

responsible, and haughty judgments from a First World nation to that of those of a Third World nation.

Animal rights activists, especially the radicals, scream about the “morality” of such an act as killing a rhino for its horn, or killing elephants for their tusks. The pictures that anger them the most are of Westerners who paid to kill animals for trophies. These animal advocate extremists will go at no length to find out who the Westerner, or specifically the American, is and then to threaten the big-game hunter’s life. In 2015, in Zimbabwe, Dr. Walter Palmer of the US killed “Cecil” the lion, and once his picture caught on the web the extreme harassment and threats began. He had to close his dentist office for a while as the threats against his life persisted. The activists felt ‘Justice’ was necessary for the death of the lion.

However, from a philosophical understanding of jurisprudence and the origins of Justice, it is not possible for nonpersons to partake in Justice as it is only a compromise between people as an intraspecies agreement as opposed to interspecies. The Eighteenth Century philosopher **David Hume** believed **animals could also be rational**, perhaps to a lesser degree than humans, but are still incapable of being a part of the legal and ‘Just’ parts of human society.

In contrast, the leading vegan and vegetarian philosopher of modern day, Dr. Peter Singer, argues that **bestiality is permissible** so long as it does not harm the animal, but animals outside of humans should be treated the

same when it comes to limiting pain. Throughout Singer's work he explicitly claims humans are not equal to other animals, but we humans should not partake in "speciesism," and we should all adopt a vegan or vegetarian lifestyle because he believes human suffering to be equal to that of animal suffering.

I do agree that animals feel pain and pleasure, although I would argue that it is not to the same degree as humans. While the varying degrees do not determine equality or inequality under the law, it does argue there is a fundamental and natural difference **between humans and other animals**. This also does not provide enough reason that humans 'should' change and limit or eliminate animal use and consumption.

Often in philosophy, law, and even in daily life, people use the word "should" as meaning 'ought' or 'obligation,' yet conflate the two unbeknownst to them. It is typical for us to read past such a word as 'should,' and think nothing of the use or mention. If the word was meant as 'ought,' then it is a moral personal choice to make; if the word is meant to be interchangeable with 'obligation,' then Singer is either suggesting a deity will punish those that do not oblige his vegetarian or vegan code of ethics, or a legal system will punish. An 'obligation' would indicate there is a backlash from one's actions.

Perhaps, being a secular utilitarian, he equates humans to other animals and believes it is not in humans' best interest to use animals for human

consumption, and the ‘obligation’ arises from the possible negative consequences as “punishment” for consuming animals. A natural consequence would not be ‘Justice,’ as it must be intentional at bare minimum.

Certainly then, the only form of ‘Justice’ possible is an objective one; and as controversial as it may be, it is equality under the law for humans and humans alone. If ‘Justice’ sprung forth as a natural ideology of protection for the division of individuals, it is still only a human idea. To take this human idea and force it upon animals as a means of thinking it benefits the animal, we can easily come up with plenty more that we can force upon animals such as obeying all laws, animals respecting other animals, social norms, customs, paying taxes, not using the restroom in public, wearing clothes, respecting property rights, and so forth. No matter the case, ‘Justice’ is established for humans in general, and animals are unable to reciprocate the necessary parts ‘Justice’ requires to maintain.

This is where some will respond that the same can be said for infants, elderly, and mentally disabled. However, infants have the potential capacity to become full-fledged persons while their being and assets may be held in trust by their guardians; the elderly were full-fledged persons and while they are of mental capacity they determine who shall handle their assets and life, etc.; and the mentally disabled are continually held in trust by their guardians acting in responsibility of their well-being.

Furthermore, ‘Justice’ is based on property rights. As the philosopher **John Locke** suggested, we have **property intrinsically within ourselves** as our Life and well-being, property in our Liberty and actions, and property extrinsically from ourselves as in goods or things in the world. Animals do not possess these things, and we cannot force that upon them. Even if they did have these things, there was never a means to negotiate a contract with animals from our species to other animal species.

Simply put, those that scream for ‘Justice’ for other species outside of humans are either misunderstanding the very concept of ‘Justice,’ or they are intentionally misapplying it and are advocating for the subjective and varying concept of “social justice.” Perfectly stated by lauded economist **F.A. Hayek**, **“Justice is** an attribute of individual action. I can be Just or unjust towards my fellow man; But the conception of a ‘social justice’- to expect from an impersonal process, which nobody can control- to bring about a ‘Just’ result is not only a meaningless conception, it’s completely impossible.”

Hayek’s work on the topic of ‘Justice’ suggests that if one puts a word in front of the word ‘Justice’ then it is no longer ‘Justice.’ Justice does not require anything else with it, it is either equality under the law for everyone, or subjective infringements will begin to deteriorate the entire process.

Nevertheless, organizations like **PETA**, have continually asked for so-called "Justice" for animals killed in hunting. For example, with the case of Cecil being killed by Walter Palmer, PETA's President Ingrid Newkirk released **a public statement** on July 28, 2015, in regards to Palmer, "…he needs to be extradited, charged, and, preferably, hanged…" Yet, no one has done anything in regards to the legal and moral issues of threatening the life of the man.

Set aside the concept that these animal rights activists believe humans to be equal to other animals, and that they desire some imaginary system of 'Justice' that also incorporates equal animal rights, the point is that we do have a 'Justice' system and it was originally created by people, for people. So, to threaten a fellow person's life automatically negates **'Justice,'** and removes the unbiased impersonal third-party, i.e. the governing body to judge the case as to negate prejudice. Extrajudicial actions, such as summary executions, are what was seen in the Jim Crow South of instant punishment without fair and equal trials via lynching.

What these activist groups do not seem to realize is that their concept of 'Justice' as seen through the monster of "social justice," is nothing new. For some reason, there is a common misconception that **Social Justice Warriors (SJWs)** are only left-leaning individuals, when in fact they can be right-leaning as well.

Politics aside, “social justice” does more to harm the fabric of society and ‘Justice,’ itself, from the left and the right. *Written in 1940, in his work Interventionism, An Economic Analysis,* **Ludwig von Mises** wrote, “**The ‘progressives’ who** today masquerade as ‘liberals’ may rant against ‘fascism’; yet it is their policy that paves the way for Hitlerism.” Indeed, it was on these social and subjective agendas that Hitler, who **became mostly vegetarian** by the end of his life, rose to power, verifying that “social justice” can equally be found on the political right or left. And as cliché as it may be to bring up Hitler anymore, his being a vegetarian at least indicates just because someone is a vegan or vegetarian, it does not make them a better person.

III.

Delving into the issues of big game hunting, I have found many protests against the killing of elephants for their ivory tusks and rhinos for their horns. Big game hunting involves hunting the “**big five**“: lions, leopards, rhinoceroses, elephants, and Cape buffalo.I agree, this issue appears as though an especially major waste to kill an animal solely for its tusks or horns. Consequently, some animals have been hunted to extinction, while others are on the brink of becoming extinct. We, in the West, do not typically know what it is like to even have such large and majestic animals roaming about freely to the extent in African and Asian countries. However,

we also do not know what it is like to constantly be starving, in need of clean water, constantly struggling to survive, etc., as much as they do.

Essentially, **Westerners are judging** the means in which certain people in **African countries** make a living by using animals for parts. Such judgments are oddly arrogant and naïve. In **Zimbabwe**, for instance, where some of the big game hunting and poaching exists, the average annual **income** is around $909 USD as of 2016. The **unemployment rate** is soo volatile and measurements are insanely unreliable that organizations have ranged that rate anywhere from 4% to a whopping 95%. Before they ended **their currency** in 2009 and switching to USD by 2015, their inflation rate by mid-November, 2008, reached around 79,600,000,000% making $1 USD equal to around $2,621,984,228 ZWD.

Some other countries where big game hunting occurs are Namibia, Kenya, and South Africa. In **Namibia**, the average annual income hovers around $6,000 USD with a 34% unemployment rate. $1 USD is equal to about **$13.75 NAD** today. Namibia's economy is said to be on a constant downward spiral with little hope in the near future. In Kenya the average annual income is around $1,143 USD with an 11% unemployment rate, and $1 USD is equal to about **$101 KES** today. **Kenya's economy** is doing even worse than Namibia, and is on a perpetual downward slope. Lastly, in **South Africa** the average annual income is around $12,260 USD with an almost 27% unemployment rate, and $1 USD is equal to around **$13.73**

ZAR. Keeping in mind the struggling economic situations of this region of the world, it is easier to see how people can result to **hunting** and poaching, especially when the benefits far outweigh the losses.

The current market estimate for **elephant tusks**, which are made of ivory, is around $730 USD per kg, 1 kg is equal to a little over 2 lb, and the average African elephant tusk **weighs** anywhere from 23 to 45 kg, or 51 to 99 lbs; some alpha bull elephants known as “tuskers” can weigh around 100 kg, or 220 lbs. This means one elephant with two tusks, just counting the average market price in USD times the weight in pounds and times two, can bring in anywhere from $74,460 USD to $321,200 USD. If your average income is around $900 USD per year in Zimbabwe, that is over 8 years pay for you and 9 of your friends for the $74,460, and up to a little over 35 years of work for you and 9 of your friends for the $321,200.

You can do the math to continue the enormous positive impact this has on the families and the regions these are sold, and the incentive to kill elephants for their tusks. The **elephant meat** can fetch anywhere from $1 USD to around $5.55 USD per pound with an average of 1,000 pounds per elephant, equaling $1,000 USD to almost $6,000 USD per elephant in meat alone. In many of these kills, if the hunter came from a Western nation to hunt on these hunting reservations, they take little-to-none of the meat, and that meat is then either sold by the company running the operation or

donated to local villages. This practice is standard across all of the animals killed on these big game hunting expeditions.

Many Westerners will then respond that this is still wrong to kill elephants, because these are glorious and majestic fauna who are kind and loving, and they see humans as cute puppies. Well, according to the **Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)**, that is not entirely correct.

In fact, in most areas of Africa, elephants are seen as giant rats who destroy fences, destroy and eat crops around **200 to 600 lbs per day.** They also threaten the lives of especially farmers, where around 200 people have been **killed in the past 7 years in Kenya** alone, and drink around 50 gallons of water per day. This has a detrimental impact on people living in these regions, threatening their livelihood almost daily. Due to **constant drought** in these African nations, elephants are often on the move for more water and food and will go into populated areas to get necessary sustenance. However, that comes at the expense of people within those areas, such as loss of precious clean water, food, crops, property damage, and at times the people's lives. Thus, big game hunting is often in protection of much-needed natural resources.

Rhino horns are another thing people hunt for, and it is an ongoing issue in these regions and others. The **price tag on rhino horns** ranges from $60,000 USD per kg to $100,000 USD per kg, and the average weight of 1.5

to 3 kilograms, or 3 to almost 7 lbs; this means one horn can fetch from $90,000 USD to $300,000 USD. The drive for such an item is really found in Asian medicine, especially found in **Vietnam** where the idea is that if the horn is grounded into a powder and put into medicine it will help fight cancer.

The same is true for lions and tigers being killed for their bones, teeth, and claws. The bones are ground down to powder for alternative medicine, while the teeth and claws are used for jewelry. Of course the **heads and skins** of lions and tigers are also a prized possession for those in that market.

So, when there is severe drought, it is a cultural norm, it is difficult to leave or build fences strong enough, these animals are destroying crops along with the drought, people's **water** is evaporating and being drank in large amounts by these animals, there is little-to-no work and the pay is low, these animals have plenty of edible meat, and the price tag on them is soo high, it is easy to understand that these people see far more pros than cons when it comes to big game hunting.

IV.

With many of the issues previously mentioned, I have specified concerns about 'Justice' for animals. This includes using animals for consumption and for other practices. The best solution, however, lies not in banning the

buying or selling of ivory or horns, nor in banning hunting. The most practical solution is noted by CITES and the Cato Institute. Their solution is to make the trading of these goods legal, create private land that holds these animals in an open area while providing food and water for them in regions that are conducive, and treat them as cattle. In essence, this is what helped to save the American bison from reaching extinction.

The American bison, also known as buffalo, were estimated to be in the 60 million population range throughout North America prior to 1800. By 1900 that number dwindled to a measly 300 due to over-hunting, overconsumption, disease, and predation by wolves. In the mid to late 1800s, companies were making fertilizer out of bison skulls. They also used the skins for coats. Moreover, buffalo meat is continually a revered product for meat eaters.

In the 1870s, it was clear that bison were becoming rare and their value was extremely high on the market. In 1905, American citizens came together to initiate a protection organization for bison, the American Bison Society. By 1919, it was estimated there were 12,521 bison. This number grew exponentially once private companies began breeding them as cattle for consumption. Although the original initiative was a joint effort of government and private citizens, the largest growth was via the private sector. Today, it is estimated there are around 500,000 bison in North America. That is a drastic improvement from 300.

This same process could be implemented in areas of Africa and Asia by privatizing land, building fences that can keep elephants in, providing enough food and water for them, and selling them off as cattle throughout the world for human consumption. This would decrease the value of tusks and elephant meat, while helping to maintain a larger population of elephants. A practice such as this also disincentives poachers because of decreased profits. However, it would increase the job market in that region for taking care of elephants and all of the processes necessary for a market of trade for elephant goods. This is similar to the concept of decriminalizing drugs, as it would create fewer violent criminals, but many more jobs.

Ecology cannot determine a precise number of a species. It can only specify their relations with their environment and other species. We humans naturally utilize what is around us, sometimes to the eradication of other species. I cannot say this is good, especially if more use from them would benefit us further. The world of nature is constantly in chaos, detrimentally, and in harmony, symbiotically. We are a part of that same cycle and we are able to reason far more expediently than other animals. So, if we are able to get use out of animals, we will. Same, in favor of animal rights activists, if we can get the same use out of plants as animals, that lessons the need for animal consumption. Yet, if people still choose to use animals, I cannot fault them for it.

As far as the topic of domesticated animals is concerned, the best solution for giving them anything close to a human right would be under property rights. If a dog is owned by someone, that dog is then the property of that owner and if anyone were to steal or harm the dog, the case can be taken to court. If the same dog hurts another person's dog, the owner of the victim will have a claim against the attacking dog.

In matter of 'Justice,' humans can go to a court and claim their grievances, other animals are unable. If one dog attacks another, it cannot explain what took place. In order for a court to be unbiased, a jury or judge must be able to understand both sides in a human case, and the evidence must be insurmountable for either side. In order to not muddy the water of 'Justice' further than we already struggle with, strictly keeping domesticated animals under human property rights will be the best possible voice for animals.

Now, animal rights activists may respond that the same was once said for women, children, slaves, elderly, and the mentally disabled. They may point to so-called evidence in nature or in domesticated animals to suggest animals have "morals," "ethics," or a sense of "Justice." Perhaps they have some inclinations to these things under a different meaning. But, it is not evident that all of the other species share it, and it is between their species and the species they choose to associate with, to a much less effective degree than our own species is capable of.

Thus, I revert back to the fact that only humans have "rights." 'Justice' is a human construct to give protection and to ensure recompense for the individual, not a collective, and these "rights" are strictly negative in the sense that we do not directly harm other people. Rights are a moral claim to not be infringed upon by others. It is my belief that only humans have morals, ethics, rights, and Justice.

Equally so, the world will never be a perfect place and simply wishing others that do not agree with one's agenda no longer exist makes one part of the problem. Moreover, harming others who do not agree with oneself will not solve the world's problems. No utopia will exist by wishing away problems and ridding the world of those that use animals for consumption. Vegetarianism, veganism, and animal rights activists need to understand that they are free to make a personal preference, but forcing that on others only infuriates others. By forcefully intertwining our morals, ethics, and Justice with that of other species, it would further complicate our position as individuals in the world. It would become a constant burden in courts, and destroy the very fabric which protects each of us – 'Justice.'